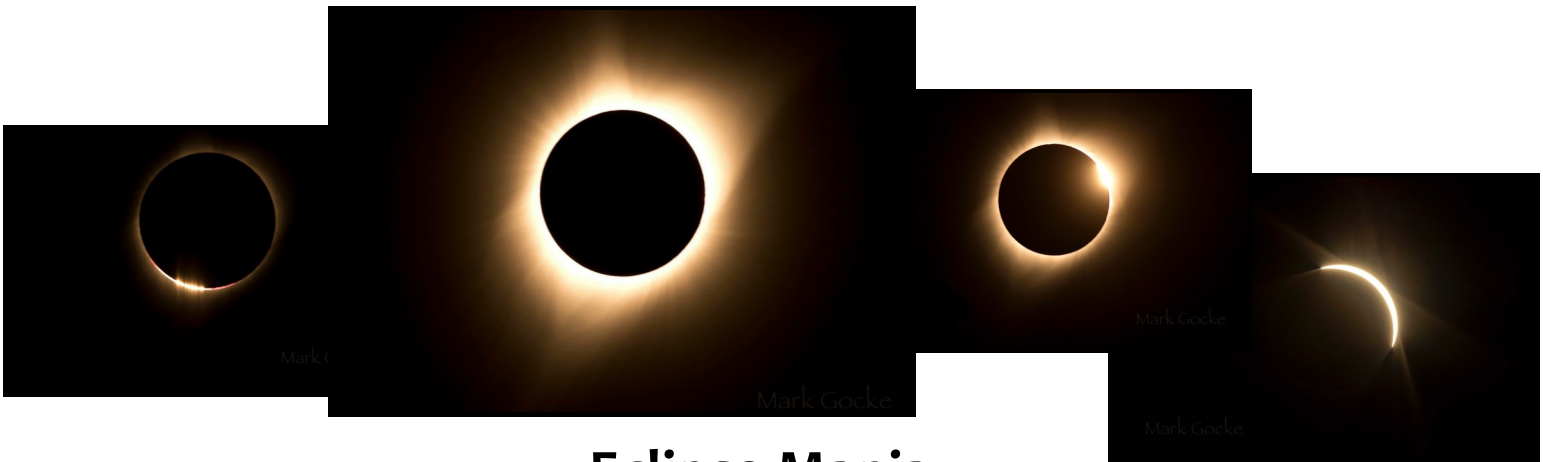




Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Pinedale Region

September 2017 Newsletter



Eclipse Mania



Many people headed into the backcountry for their eclipse experience. There were approximately 540 vehicles at the Elkhart Park trailhead

With both the Jackson and Pinedale regions in the path of totality for the August 21 solar eclipse, nearly all regional Game and Fish personnel were out welcoming visitors, answering questions and helping them avoid problems with bears, fires and other regulations. The Department tallied over 7,000 public contacts across the state, reporting a low number of violations, no human-large carnivore conflicts and no damage to Game and Fish properties.

Employees also worked to keep the increased number of boaters safe and keep aquatic invasive species out of Wyoming's waters. Another task for Game and Fish personnel was patrolling wilderness areas and assisting federal, state, county and local agencies. By all accounts it was a memorable event for all!



Several people headed to area waters to experience the eclipse. There was an estimated 50 boats on Fremont Lake. (Below) Darkness during totality





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Bridger Lake Trip

Pinedale Fish Biologist Darren Rhea and Pinedale game wardens Bubba Haley and Jordan Kraft made a backcountry trip into the Bridger Lakes area of the Wind River Range to conduct fish surveys and check anglers. It had been 45 years since the fish in Bridger Lakes had been surveyed and the crew found there to be a thriving golden trout population in one lake and swarms of brookies in the others. The crew also found some nice Colorado River cutthroats in nearby Sauerkraut Lake (bottom). Photos by Jordan Kraft





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Fall Creek's New Wildlife-Friendly Fence

After two years of hard work and strong partnerships, the Game and Fish Department's Pinedale Habitat & Access crew recently completed a new wildlife-friendly pipe fence around the Fall Creek Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA) near Pinedale. The fence was necessary to keep livestock out while allowing safe wildlife passage in and out of the unit. The area serves as an elk feedground in the winter, so elk are regularly moving in and out. Plus, the parcel lies within the massive Red Desert to Hoback mule deer migration route along the foot of the Wind River Range.

The four miles of fence took two years to complete as it was in very rocky terrain and several large boulders had to be removed prior to construction. Plus, crews had limited time to work due to burn bans preventing the welding of the pipes and

big game winter range closures preventing access. However, while a conventional barbed-wire fence will last 20-50 years, it is estimated the new pipe fence may easily last 200 years or more!



Much of the funding was provided through the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust Fund and the donation of the old drill pipe was from Questar Exploration and Production (QEP) and Jonah Energy. The two companies donated some

2000 (35 foot) sections of pipe valued at approximately \$25/section, totaling \$50,000. The value of the pipe has since gone up to \$45-\$50 per section today.

The Pinedale Habitat & Access crew is now in the process of collecting addition pipe for enclosures to protect vegetation on the Soda Lake WHMA and other critical wildlife areas managed by the BLM.





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From the Front Desk...

Pinedale Game & Fish office managers Lori Johnson and Kristen Draney would like to remind hunters and anglers of a few key points:

- 1) Most general deer seasons in the area run from Sept. 15-Oct. 6 and are for bucks only with three points or more on either antler.
- 2) Elk hunters are reminded that an Elk Management Stamp is required to hunt those elk hunt areas associated with elk feedgrounds, which includes most hunt areas in the Jackson and Pinedale regions. Specifically, an Elk Management Stamp is required to hunt elk in Hunt Areas 70, 71, 74, 75, and 77-98. These stamps can be purchased for \$12.50 at any license vendor.
- 3) There are three great publications now available to anglers: the Bridger Wilderness lakes fishing guide, and float maps for the Upper Green River and now New Fork River. All three can be found on the WY Game & Fish website here:

https://wgfd.wyo.gov/WGFD/media/content/PDF/Fishing/Bridger_FishingGuide.pdf

https://wgfd.wyo.gov/WGFD/media/content/PDF/Fishing/GREENRIVER_FLOATAREA_MAP.pdf

https://wgfd.wyo.gov/WGFD/media/content/PDF/Fishing/NEWFORK_FLOATAREA_MAP.pdf



Wyoming Range Ram

This hefty bighorn sheep ram was taken in Hunt Area 24 in the Wyoming Range west of Big Piney. This sheep herd has struggled over the years and the number of licenses has been reduced to just one per year. This lucky hunter bagged the trophy of a lifetime.





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Hunting For Kokanee

A crew including Pinedale Fish Biologist Darren Rhea and Statewide Spawning Coordinator Kris Holmes spent a few days up at Green River Lake trying to capture spawning kokanee salmon. Fish managers have been trying to establish additional source populations for kokanee eggs in the state to help buffer some of the variability in production from year to year. Green River Lake is being explored as an alternative. This is the first year mature fish would be making a spawning run in the lake so crews are experimenting with how to capture them, the timing, run size, etc. Preliminary results look like there could be a viable run of spawning fish that could be captured and produce another egg source. Rhea says the kokanee population is also gaining traction as a sport-fishery with anglers starting to actively target them in the lake.



Spawning Kokanee salmon captured at the inlet to Green River Lake. Photos by Darren Rhea



(Above & Below) Pinedale Fisheries Technicians Kole Stewart and Colter Brown set up nets to capture spawning Kokanee salmon at the inlet to Green River Lake.



A three-year-old spawning Kokanee salmon captured at the inlet of Green River Lake.





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Big Game Hunt Season Reminders

Most general deer hunting seasons in the Jackson and Pinedale area started September 15 and run through October 6. **A significant change to most general deer seasons in the area is that they are open to buck deer only with three points or more on either antler.** With the extremely severe winter of 2016-2017, unprecedented mortality was documented in all age classes, but particularly fawns and older deer. Some really nice bucks have already been taken, but hunters should anticipate seeing substantially fewer deer during the next few hunting seasons.

Hunters are reminded to familiarize themselves with the hunting regulations for the species and area they plan to hunt. While most hunters follow hunting laws and regulations, occasionally some may run afoul of the law. The following is a listing of the most common violations local wildlife law enforcement officers come across every hunting season.

Most general elk seasons will be getting underway in the latter part of September and early October. Elk hunters are reminded that an Elk Management Stamp is required to hunt those elk hunt areas associated with elk feedgrounds,

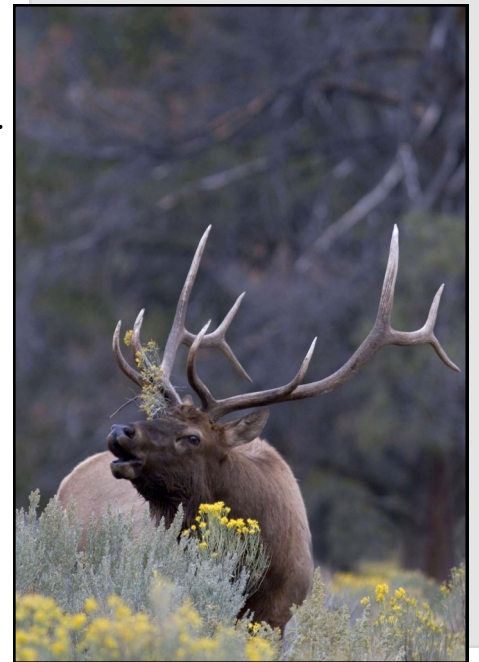
which includes most hunt areas in the Jackson and Pinedale regions. Specifically, an Elk Management Stamp is required to hunt elk in Hunt Areas 70, 71, 74, 75, and 77-98. These stamps can be purchased for \$12.50 at any license vendor.

Avoid these other common violations:

Failure to Tag - Every big game, trophy game and wild turkey license has a carcass coupon attached. Each license has the tagging instructions printed on the coupon. There are four steps to properly "tag" big game, trophy game or wild turkey: 1) Detach the carcass coupon from the license. 2) Date the carcass coupon by cutting out the entire date and month of the kill. 3) Sign the carcass coupon (but not before harvest). 4) Attach the coupon to the carcass before leaving the site of the kill. The coupon may be removed during transportation to prevent its loss, but it must be in possession of the person accompanying the carcass.

Wanton waste - Shooting an animal and leaving the meat to waste. Hunters are required to remove all edible portions of meat from their big game animal. This includes all four front and hind quarters and the loin meat along the spine.

Evidence of Gender - Many Wyoming hunting licenses require the taking of a specific sex of animal. There are also season dates in some hunt areas when only a specific sex of animal can be taken. To satisfy the proof of sex requirement the regulation states: "in areas where the taking of any big game animal is restricted to a specific sex of animal, either the visible external sex organs, head or antlers shall accompany the animal as a whole or edible portion thereof."



Hunters are encouraged to be on the lookout for wildlife violations and report such violations to the Stop Poaching hotline at **1-877-WGFD-TIP** or 1-877- 943-3847. Informants can remain anonymous and may be eligible for a reward. Hunting regulations can be obtained from any hunting and fishing license vendor. For more information you may contact the Jackson Game and Fish office at 1-800-423-4113 or the Pinedale Game and Fish office at 1-800-452-9107.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department wishes everyone a safe and successful hunting season!



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Roundtails go to Meadow

Pinedale Fish Biologist Pete Cavalli and Fisheries Technician Colter Brown (Left) captured approximately 200 roundtail chubs in Burnt Lake and transplanted them into Meadow Lake to establish another population in a lake that has no predaceous fish species. Roundtail chub are a nongame fish species native to western Wyoming. This species was once common in many waters around Pinedale and Green River, but their numbers have dwindled in recent decades. Introduction of non-native predaceous fish probably played a large role in their decline.



Of Note

A Bridger Teton National Forest employee provided this photo of a mountain goat seen between Tourist and Wells Creeks in the upper Green River Drainage recently. Although rare, it is not the first mountain goat to be seen in the Wind River Range.

